

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for facilitating transactions between a product brand manager and manufacturing organizations using a transactional computer system, the product brand manager having a product brand and product brand information comprising information for manufacturing the product brand, and there being manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing organizations comprising the manufacturing process capabilities of the respective manufacturing organization, the method comprising:

communicating the product brand information from the product brand manager to the transactional computer system;

communicating the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organizations from the manufacturing organizations to the transactional computer system;

using the transactional computer system to process the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organizations and to generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate manufacturing organization, the selection comprising using the transactional computer system to compare the product brand information to the manufacturing organization information; and

using the transactional computer system to communicate the selection information to the product brand manager.

2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the communicating of the product brand information from the product brand manager to the transactional computer system is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

5 3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the communicating of the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organizations from the manufacturing organizations to the transactional computer system is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

10 4. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the using of the transactional computer system to process the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organizations and to generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate manufacturing organization is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

15 5. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the use of the transactional computer system to compare the product brand information to the manufacturing organization information is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

20 6. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the use of the transactional computer system to communicate the selection information to the product brand manager is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

7. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

the product brand manager comprises a product brand manager computer;

and

the transactional computer system is operatively coupled to the product

5 brand computer to communicate the product brand information from the product
brand computer and to communicate the selection information to the product brand
computer.

8. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

each of the manufacturing organizations comprises a manufacturing

10 organization computer; and

the transactional computer system is operatively coupled to each of the
manufacturing organization computers to receive the manufacturing organization
information from the manufacturing organization computers.

9. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

15 the product brand manager comprises a product brand manager computer;

each of the manufacturing organizations comprises a manufacturing
organization computer;

the transactional computer system is operatively coupled to the product
brand computer to communicate the product brand information from the product
20 brand computer and to communicate the selection information to the product brand
computer; and

the transactional computer system is operatively coupled to each of the manufacturing organization computers to receive the manufacturing organization information from the manufacturing organization computers.

10. A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the transactional computer
5 system receives the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information from the product brand manager computer and the manufacturing organization computer respectively without human intervention at the transactional computer system and automatically selects the at least one candidate manufacturing organization without human intervention at the transactional
10 computer system.

11. A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the transactional computer system generates the selection information without human intervention.

12. A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the transactional computer
15 system communicates the selection information to the product brand manager without human intervention.

13. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the transactional computer system comprises at least one computer operatively coupled to a network.

14. A method as recited in claim 13, wherein the transactional computer system comprises a plurality of computers and a distributed database.

20 15. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the transactional computer system comprises a local area network.

16. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the transactional computer system comprises a wide area network.

17. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand manager comprises an owner of the product brand.

5 18. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand manager comprises a product development organization.

19. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand comprises a material manufactured by a batch chemical process.

20 20. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communication comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise a general recipe.

21. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communication comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise pricing information.

15 22. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communication comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise schedule information.

20 23. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communication comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise delivery information..

24. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communication comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise quality information.

25. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communicating comprises communicating the product brand information in a general recipe format.

26. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communicating comprises communicating the product brand information in a normalized format.

27. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organizations comprise contract manufacturing organizations.

28. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein each of the manufacturing organizations comprises a site.

29. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein each of the manufacturing organizations comprises an area.

30. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein each of the manufacturing organizations comprises a process cell.

31. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises site information.

32. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises area information.

33. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises process cell information.

34. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises equipment information.

5 35. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises flow information.

36. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises scheduling information.

37. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises price information.

38. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises delivery information.

39. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises capacity information.

15 40. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises plant location information.

41. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:
each of the manufacturing organizations is capable of manufacturing a product; and

20 the manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing organizations comprises the product for the manufacturing organization.

42. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

each of the manufacturing organizations is capable of manufacturing a product within at least one product classification; and

the manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing organizations comprises the at least one product classification for the manufacturing organization.

43. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information communicating comprises communicating the manufacturing organization information in a normalized format.

44. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising excluding the product brand information from the manufacturing organizations.

45. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising excluding the manufacturing information from the product brand manager.

46. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communicating comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise a general recipe.

47. A method as recited in claim 46, wherein the processing comprises converting the general recipe to a plurality of master recipes, and comparing the plurality of master recipes to the manufacturing organization information.

48. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information processing comprises formatting the product brand information to comprise a general recipe.

49. A method as recited in claim 46, wherein the processing comprises converting the general recipe to a plurality of master recipes, and comparing the plurality of master recipes to the manufacturing organization information.

50. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the processing comprises
5 providing a normalized set of process parameters, and converting the product brand information to the normalized set of process parameters.

51. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing
organization information communication comprises providing a normalized set of
process parameters, and providing the manufacturing organization information for
10 each of the manufacturing organizations as the normalized set of process
parameters.

52. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the processing comprises
providing a normalized set of process parameters, and converting the
manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing
15 organizations to the normalized set of process parameters.

53. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the processing comprises:
providing a normalized set of process parameters;
converting the product brand information to the normalized set of process
parameters; and

20 converting the manufacturing organization information to the normalized set
of process parameters.

54. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information is stored in a database.

55. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information is stored in a distributed database.

5 56. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information is stored in a secure database.

57. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information is stored in a database.

58. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information is stored in a distributed database.

59. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information is stored in a secure database.

60. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:
the product brand information comprises a general recipe; and
15 the processing comprises converting the general recipe into at least one master recipe.

61. A method as recited in claim 60, wherein the processing comprises converting the general recipe into a plurality of the master recipes.

62. A method as recited in claim 61, wherein the processing comprises
20 comparing the plurality of the master recipes with the manufacturing organization information.

63. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

the product brand information comprises steps required to make the product brand;

the manufacturing organization information comprises steps capable of being carried out by the manufacturing organization; and

5 the processing comprises comparing the product brand information steps with the manufacturing organization steps to identify a match.

64. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one candidate manufacturing organization selection comprises selecting as the at least one candidate manufacturing organization each of the manufacturing organizations
10 that has at least one master recipe for the general recipe for the product brand.

65. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one candidate manufacturing organization selection comprises assessing the extent to which each of the manufacturing organizations matches the product brand information and assigning to each of the manufacturing organizations a score, and including within
15 the selection information each of the at least one candidate manufacturing organizations for which the score is above a threshold value.

66. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one candidate manufacturing organization selection comprises assessing the extent to which each of the manufacturing organizations matches the product brand information and
20 assigning to each of the manufacturing organizations a score, and including within the at least one candidate manufacturing organizations a predetermined number of the manufacturing organizations having the highest of the scores.

67. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one candidate manufacturing organization selection comprises assessing the extent to which each of the manufacturing organizations matches the product brand information and assigning to each of the manufacturing organizations a rank, and including within
5 the selection information each of the at least one candidate manufacturing organizations in order of the rank.

68. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one candidate manufacturing organization selection comprises assessing the extent to which each of the manufacturing organizations matches the product brand information satisfies
10 a weighted set of selection criteria.

69. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection information comprises the number of manufacturing organizations comprising the at least one candidate manufacturing organizations.

70. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection information
15 comprises information sufficient to confirm that the at least one candidate manufacturing organization can manufacture the product brand according to the product brand information, but the selection information excludes information sufficient to identify the at least one candidate manufacturing organization.

71. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection information
20 comprises information useful to the product brand manager.

72. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection information comprises price information.

73. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection information comprises public selection information and private selection information; and the selection information communicating comprises communicating the authorized selection information to the product brand manager and withholding the unauthorized selection information from the product brand manager.

74. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the communication of the selection information to the product brand manager comprises communicating the selection information to a product brand manager computer accessible by the product brand manager.

75. A method as recited in claim 74, wherein the communication of the selection information to the product brand manager comprises communicating the selection information automatically upon the selection of the at least one candidate manufacturing organization, without human intervention.

76. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising communicating the selection information to the at least one candidate manufacturing organization.

77. A method for facilitating transactions between a product brand manager and manufacturing organizations using a transactional computer system, the product brand manager having a product brand and product brand information comprising information for manufacturing the product brand, and there being manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing organizations comprising the manufacturing process capabilities of the respective manufacturing organization, the method comprising:

communicating the product brand information from the product brand manager to the transactional computer system;

communicating the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organizations from the manufacturing organizations to the transactional computer system;

using the transactional computer system to process the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organizations and to generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate manufacturing organization, the selection being carried out by the transactional computer system and comprising

confirming that the product brand information comprises a general recipe and to the extent the confirmation is not made, converting the product brand information into the general recipe,

converting the general recipe into a plurality of master recipes, and comparing the product brand information to the manufacturing organization information; and

using the transactional computer system to communicate the selection information to the product brand manager.

78. A method as recited in claim 77, wherein the communicating of the product brand information from the product brand manager to the transactional

computer system is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

79. A method as recited in claim 77, wherein the communicating of the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organizations from the manufacturing organizations to the transactional computer system is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

80. A method as recited in claim 77, wherein the using of the transactional computer system to process the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organizations and to generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate manufacturing organization is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

81. A method as recited in claim 77, wherein the use of the transactional computer system to compare the product brand information to the manufacturing organization information is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

82. A method as recited in claim 77, wherein the use of the transactional computer system to communicate the selection information to the product brand manager is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

83. A method for facilitating transactions between a manufacturing organization and product brand managers using a transactional computer system,

each of the product brand managers having a product brand and product brand information comprising information for manufacturing the product brand, and there being manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organization comprising the manufacturing process capabilities of the manufacturing

5 organization, the method comprising:

communicating the product brand information from the product brand managers to the transactional computer system;

10 communicating the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organization to the transactional computer system;

using the transactional computer system to process the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate product brand manager from the product brand managers and to generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate product brand
15 managers, the selection comprising using the transactional computer system to compare the product brand information to the manufacturing organization information; and

using the transactional computer system to communicate the selection information to the manufacturing information.

20 84. A system for facilitating transactions between a product brand manager and manufacturing organizations, the product brand manager having a product brand and product brand information comprising information for

manufacturing the product brand, and there being manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing organizations comprising the manufacturing process capabilities of the respective manufacturing organization, the system comprising:

5 a network comprising a transactional computer system, at least one product brand manager computer and a plurality of manufacturing organization computers, each of the manufacturing organizations having one of the plurality of the manufacturing organization computers;

10 the product brand manager computer comprising a storage device for storing the product brand information and communication means for communicating the product brand information to the transactional computer system;

15 each of the manufacturing organization computers comprising a storage device for storing the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing, and communication means for communicating the manufacturing organization information to the transactional computer system;

20 the transactional computer system comprising a processor for processing the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organizations and to generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate manufacturing organization; and

communications means for communicating the selection information to the product brand manager computer without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

85. A system for facilitating transactions between a manufacturing organization and product brand managers, each of the product brand managers having a product brand and product brand information comprising information for manufacturing the product brand, and there being manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organization comprising the manufacturing process capabilities of the manufacturing organization, the system comprising:

a network comprising a transactional computer system, at least one manufacturing organization computer and a plurality of product brand manager computers, each of the product brand computers having one of the plurality of the product brand manager computers;

each of the product brand manager computers comprising a storage device for storing the product brand information and communication means for communicating the product brand information to the transactional computer system;

the manufacturing organization computer comprising a storage device for storing the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing, and communication means for communicating the manufacturing organization information to the transactional computer system;

the transactional computer system comprising a processor for processing the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate product brand manager from the product brand managers and to generate selection information regarding the at least one

5 candidate product brand managers; and

communications means for communicating the selection information to the manufacturing organization computer without human intervention at the transactional computer system.